

Carmen Lanche
Comunidades sin Fronteras, Norwalk, CT

**SB284: "AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN
INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF
IMMIGRATION STATUS"**

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Carmen Lanche, I am the Director of the organization Comunidades Sin Fronteras, in the city of Norwalk. I am in favor of SB 284: A LAW TO INCREASE THE AGE FROM 8 TO 18 YEARS FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN REGARDLESS OF THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS.

In my role as director of the organization, I have seen how living without health care affects families. In the midst of this pandemic, I have seen our community suffer from not having medical access for their family. Among our clients, they have lived with fear, uncertainty, anxiety, panic, being sick, because they do not have medical insurance that protects them and gives their families the freedom to recover their health. They live under the pressure of paying a bill of thousands of dollars. They go to the emergency room for care and often go to community clinics, but after being referred to a specialist, they have to wait up to 2 years on a long waiting list. If they had health insurance these situations could change and be of benefit.

We have seen many people die during this pandemic, children who were left without their mother and parents who were left without their children. The barriers that people without health insurance face include being less likely to receive preventive care, more likely to be hospitalized for conditions that could have been prevented, and more likely to die in the hospital than those with insurance.

This is Juan's story. Juan is part of our organization. Everything happened too fast, 1 year ago, everything changed in his life. He had been having severe stomach pains. He went to the doctor and they did not find anything, at that time, and they told him that some food had upset his stomach. He returned the following week with a second medical appointment, to be referred to a specialist. It took them 1 year to find him a date. When doing the endoscopy, the doctor informed him that he had stomach cancer. That devastated his entire family. He continued his treatment, but he started with pain in his back and legs, as soon as they did the MRI they gave him another bad news, cancer metastasized to the lungs and testicles. It is heartbreaking to hear that his health has worsened.

If he had had health insurance, the disease would have been detected in time, and he would have had a better chance of living.

This cannot continue to happen, our community has the right to have health insurance. Today you have the opportunity to help. In you are the words and the courage to change this reality.

I strongly support SB 284 and I hope the committee voted favorably. Thanks for your time,
Carmen Lanche.